

Physics Integration Lesson 3 – Importance of Words

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If you depend only on yourself to discover knowledge, you will be woefully unprepared to face the world. Early in life you were instructed by family members, but soon others became involved in your education: teachers, pastors, friends, books and the media. Apart from visual demonstrations of how to live life, most of your education came in the form of words. Words that need to be memorized based on their context. Multiple words describing the same thing and yet providing subtle nuances of meaning. The value of words to convey concepts both material and immaterial cannot be ignored.

When integrating faith, physics and other disciplines of knowledge, it is essential to understand the value of words. In some cases a single word provides the proper meaning with no substitutes. In other cases a single word is too limited to provide the richness of meaning implied by the situation. Using the same word in the context of different disciplines can sometimes result in confusion. However, using a set of complementary words may be most effective when moving between disciplines and different languages.

An example to illustrate the importance of words comes from the translation of the Greek word *speudo* (σπευδο). The Strong's concordance uses words such as to speed, urge and hasten as English equivalents. These words fit quite well in the six New Testament passages where *speudo* appears (Luke 2:16; 19:5,6; Acts 20:16; 22:18; 2 Peter 3:12). However, in 2 Peter 3:12 several German bibles translate *speudo* with the German equivalent of 'accelerate.' Although, not appearing in the Greek New Testament nor the Septuagint (Greek translation of the Old Testament), the Greek word for 'accelerate' is *epitachos* (ἐπιταχος), which literally means "on top of speed." This range of possible word meanings demonstrates the challenges inherent in language translation, but also demonstrates the value of exploring the range of legitimate translations.

1. If you substitute the word 'accelerate' in 2 Peter 3:12, do you feel it enhances or changes the meaning of the passage? Explain why or why not.
2. Does the word 'accelerate' imply any responsibility on our part to make things happen? Why or why not?